This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

47.1144.

MINISTERIAL POPULARITY.

A Lecture

ON THE

POPULARITY OF CHRISTIAN MINISTERS,

BY

THE REV. JAMES KENDALL.

LONDON:
WHITTAKER AND CO.; IRONBRIDGE: J. SLATER.

MDCCCXLVII.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

PREFACE.

THE reader is respectfully informed that in preaching and subsequently revising and enlarging the following Lecture, the writer imposed on himself severe restraint.

He could have introduced a great mass of additional observations, arguments, and illustrative facts. But he recollected that he was going to publish, not an octavo volume (such as the subject discussed in all its bearings would require), but a *lecture*—a long one truly, but yet brief, considering the importance of the subject. The popularity of christian ministers, is often *referred* to by eminent writers, in voluminous desertations on the christian ministry; but we have not seen in any of their publications the causes and effects of popularity discussed in a separate and distinct form. But the time is now "fully come" when a serious regard for the true dignity of the British pulpit, and the mighty interests of the christian religion demand such a discussion. Delicate and difficult as the subject is to manage, so as not to give offence, it must be undertaken, and the

writer devoutly wishes it had long since been undertaken by men of greater leisure and abilities than himself. He can well afford to sustain the charge of imprudence, should such a charge ever be preferred. Deeply conscious that *somebody* should publicly suggest *a medium* between the unbounded extravagance of some preachers, and the deadening accuracy and coolness of others. In the fear of Almighty God he humbly makes the suggestion himself.

In the "supplementary particulars" and notes which were written after the preaching of the lecture, the reader will observe "great plainness of speech." He will perceive an honest declaration of opinion, and particular familiarity of expression. But as his freedoms in all his other publications have been as kindly entertained by a *discerning* public, as they have been kindly intended, he trusts that no offence will be taken.

"Liberty to *think*" said Andrew Fuller to Earl Grey "is no liberty at all! The greatest despot cannot deprive the meanest slave of liberty to *think*; what we want is liberty to *every* man to *disseminate* his thoughts." This commendable saying is inserted with approbation in the Wesleyan magazine for October, 1846. We approve of it, and act accordingly.

And we have endeavoured not to *abuse* this liberty by printing, without first ascertaining the opinion of superior men.

The manuscript of the lecture was read on behalf of one of the first public institutions for religious literature in the kingdom; and the writer received a very courteous and official communication, declaring "the subject to be important in itself, and that it was discussed with good ability."

With a sincere wish that all things immediately connected with the christian ministry may be discreetly managed, and that, in reference to the qualifications of preachers, and the results of their labours, the community at large may be assisted to "judge righteous judgment," the writer commends his little book to the discrimination and candour of the christian public.

Madeley-Wood, Shropshire,
Feb. 1846.

SECTION I.

INTRODUCTORY.

MATT. IX. 31.

"But they when they were departed spread abroad his fame in all that country."

THE word "they" refers to two blind men to whom our Saviour had mercifully given sight. These men had earnestly implored his attention and sympathy. He had said to them, "believe ye that I am able to do this?" And they assured him that they did believe. He then immediately touched their eyes, and said, "according to your faith be it unto you." And their eyes were opened. Our Lord then particularly charged them not to let any man know of the circumstance. But in direct opposition to this injunction they made it known. So very powerful, so overflowing, was their gratitude, that they found it impossible to keep the fact secret. It was (to use a homely phrase), obliged to "come out." Wherever they went they gratefully spoke of the happy removal of their disease, and of their good and divine physician.

"When they were departed," says Saint Mathew, "they spread abroad his fame in all that country." The fame of his raising the Ruler's daughter from death to life had already gone abroad into all that land; and now the fame of his giving sight to the blind was spreading in all directions. Our Saviour was decidedly famous. His popularity as a worker of miracles, and a preacher of the gospel, appears to have been remarkably extensive. "He went about all Galilee teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people, and his fame went throughout all Syria, and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those that were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." And it is worthy of notice, that notwithstanding the contempt with which he was occasionally treated, and the derision he encountered, his fame was not only undiminished but continually increased. The cavillings, and evil-speaking, and

insolence of Scribes and Pharisees could not stop it. And though he sometimes used means direct and indirect to keep down the seeming excesses of public admiration, he was still very popular. On some occasions his discourses were so far from being flattering that they were tremendously severe. *So* severe indeed that while many might have apprehended a speedy desertion of his ministry, because of the offence it gave to some of his hearers, he nevertheless engrossed the public attention. As to "the common people," they "heard him gladly." His reputation was firmly established as a Teacher sent from God. And his fame being the result of pure excellence and usefulness to the bodies and souls of men, widely promoted that which he continually sought—the glory of his Father.

Happy the christian preacher whose fame, like that of the Redeemer's, is founded on qualities abstractedly excellent and advantageous to our holy religion!

But as ministerial fame is not, in every man's case, so honorably purchased as we could desire; and as preachers may become popular without increasing the fame of practical christianity, or, in other words, increasing the number of sincere and exemplary christians. It may

be serviceable to us, in the first place, to enquire into the merits of a *questionable* popularity in the christian ministry: examining the foundation on which it rests, and how far it may or may not contribute to the increase of true religion. I will, in the second place, consider the great importance of popularity in this ministry, when it is well deserved and judiciously applied; and, thirdly, make some admonitory reflections.

After the discussion of the subject itself, I shall respectfully solicit the reader's attention to some supplementary particulars, which, though small in themselves, have a very intimate connexion with the effectiveness of the popular minister's public services, and the tranquillity of his mind as a christian philosopher. The first department of the supplement will be addressed to the people or congregations at large. The second will *chiefly*, though not exclusively, concern the preacher.

SECTION II.

I. We propose to enquire into the merits of a questionable popularity in the christian ministry.

By *questionable* I mean the popularity concerning which judicious persons are disposed to ask, "does this serve the cause of Christ or not? Our minds are filled with involuntary scepticism on the subject. And again, "with what *sort* of people is this man popular, and in what places?" "To what *extent* is he popular, and for what length of time?" For the popularity of some men is confined to the approbation of a certain class, in certain districts of country; and even amongst these, his congregations may greatly differ in size, and sadly dwindle after a protracted stay. Now when *uneasy questions* arise in our hearts after hearing a preacher who is much followed, and after noticing the genius, temper, and modes of thinking of his chief admirers—we call his popularity *questionable.*

Having thus shewn in what sense I wish the word *questionable* to be understood, I shall now

proceed to ascertain the true meaning of the word *popular* and all its adjuncts.

Popularity in its general sense means *the favour of the people.* The etymology of the word will explain to us its exact signification, and lead us to perceive that, in itself, it is by no means a just criterion or proof of excellence.

Our best English writers of the last century, and indeed earlier than then, did not attach precisely the same notion to the word that multitudes do in our day. We can scarcely hear the adjective *popular* as a qualifying epithet applied to a *preacher,* but our judgments begin immediately to conclude that he is a very clever man, or a man of great abilities, and a pulpit orator. Or we think at least that some rare excellence attaches to him as the foundation of his popularity. But in the days when our English literature was enriched by the productions of honestly original writers, profound thinkers, competent critics, and men who took care to *discriminate,* the meaning of the word was *definite,* or fixed and settled. So it is now in the mind of the scholar.

The word *popular,* coming to us from the latin *popularis,* through the french *populaire,* was defined by Milton—"vulgar," "plebeian;" and by Hooker—"suitable to the common peo-

ple,"—familiar, not critical. This means, if I judge aright—not very nice and particular. Clarenden says it means "beloved by the people,"—pleasing to the people; and Addison says—"studious of the favour of the people."

The substantive *popularity*, from the latin *popularitas*, signified, according to Dryden—"the state of being favoured by the people;" and by Bacon, the word was thus defined,—"representation suited to vulgar conception," "what affects *the vulgar*." Then again the adverb *popularly*, according to Dryden, meant "in a plebeian manner, so as to please the crowd;" and Bacon says—"according to vulgar conception."

Here then we have the proper and full meaning of the word. And we make a wrong use of it when, on hearing it applied to the name of a man who is not truly great, we attach to it the idea of remarkable cleverness—of distinguished talent, or any other kindred notion. A man *may*, it is true, be so happy as to render himself alike pleasing to the learned and the illiterate, and even the grossly ignorant.

We have some excellent men of this sort, but they are not very numerous. Generally speaking, the man of the unlettered multitude, is not exactly the man for the well-educated and ac-

complished hearer. Educated hearers indeed may feel no disposition to be severe in their criticisms or censures, when they listen to a preacher who delights only the vulgar; but as to their *individual enjoyment* it is out of the question when a man *teaches* them nothing or next to nothing.

No man can be taught or instructed by a preacher who is not, at least *for the time* and on the *present subject* of preaching, superior to himself. It is not necessary that the preacher, in order to be instructive, should be superior to his hearers in *all* mental endowments and acquisitions; but it *is* necessary for the *present occasion of preaching* that he should possess the ability to *instruct.* If he cannot do this, he may be popular, but he is not superior. He is not the *great man* the *people* take him to be. If he can instruct superior orders of intellect, and men of education, as well as the ignorant, he is both popular and superior. But as pulpit popularity and mental superiority are in many instances things which stand widely apart from each other, popularity should not always be identified, in our thinkings, with superiority or ministerial greatness.

Now the *reasons* why so *few* preachers are found equally delighting *all* classes of hearers,

are these:—vulgar hearers will not be delighted unless the preacher adapts himself to their capacities, and makes himself attractive to them by familiarities suited to their *taste*. Taste, or mental relish, or the power of relishing some production of the mind, written or spoken, is with many even good people most deplorably *bad*. They *like* what does them no *real good* yet what *seems* good to them because they like it. But I will suppose a popular man really doing good to hearers of this sort.—Yet how can he by familiarities, or modes of thought, arrangement and expression, suited only to *children in understanding*, meet the case of the learned hearer? How can he instruct or teach him? I say he cannot do it at all, because the understanding and taste of such a hearer are far above the familiarities and littleness of such a preacher. I am not now going to debate the question, whether a learned hearer's case *ought* to be met on all occasions of preaching. I am merely saying that it *is* not met when the preacher, though superior to others, is inferior to a learned hearer on the *present subject* and *occasion of preaching*.

I may explain myself thus:—a young man who is well acquainted with the highest branches of learning, studied at the university, can-

not be instructed by the elements of knowledge taught in the common day-school; and the plain scholar in the day-school, can make nothing of the university. Apply this to preachers and hearers. A learned hearer cannot *generally* be instructed by an ignorant preacher, however popular with ignorant people. He may by a sort of *accident*, say a something new and clever to take the fancy of a learned person, but this is quite an exception to his ordinary efforts. An ignorant hearer, on the other hand, is put to great difficulty in understanding the discourse of a learned preacher, except the learned preacher uses such great plainness of speech as is not required for the learned hearer, and such as before a select well-judging congregation, and especially before an assembly of divines would be deemed an affront to the understanding, and a waste of time.

When the learned preacher uses his learning, and, in connexion with *eloquence of the highest order*, brings it to bear on a subject adapted to the highest order of intellect, he will be eminent in the estimation of the great, but not the man for *the people* at large, and consequently while soaring aloft in classic phraseology, or going down into the depths of science and metaphysics; though he may be admired by a

few even of the illiterate, he will not be understood and not followed by the crowd. This is evident from the long standing *fact* that many superior preachers in all connexions have thin congregations. And, on the other hand, the popular man, pandering to the taste of the ill-judging—dealing much in tales and anecdotes—using strong and rash and extravagant language—restless in his mind—boisterous and noisy in his manner, and fretting himself until he produces an audible commotion in his congregation, at the same time, giving little or no *instruction*—is not, and cannot in the nature of things, be the man to attract the learned hearer. He may be heard a time or two by the learned, but these will not form a part of his regular congregation. They will utterly desert him.

I am perfectly aware that superior eloquence and learning are not *essential* to the conversion of the ungodly, nor always necessary to the religious improvement of those that are already converted. But I am quite sure, at the same time, that the rich and the learned should have the gospel preached to them, as well as the poor and the ignorant; and that as the latter class are often allured to christianity by preachers suited to *their* capacities and taste, so the *former* should be accommodated by givin them

the *same truths* in a better manner. I am sure also that, as the moral purity of true religion is particularly favourable to the cultivation and embellishment of the mind, preachers should not encourage their hearers in *mental indolence.* They should not, in ministering to their *gratification,* forget their *edification.*

But my question now is how far some popular preachers who *gratify* multitudes, contribute to their edification.

It ought to be considered that the great body of the people in any nation, and more particularly in our own, are very little educated; and that their minds are not disciplined to habits of close thinking and observation. Many are not educated at all. Some learned men have asserted that out of sixteen millions of inhabitants in England and Wales, eight millions cannot write, and five millions cannot read. We may easily infer then that a preacher who delights them, and draws them after him away from other ministers of established worth and excellence, must have in him some decided peculiarity. A peculiarity simply ministering to their gratification, without producing any considerable moral effect; and at the same time filling them with error and delusion; or the happy peculiarity of con-

verting them to God, and assisting them to set out in the way to heaven.

A peculiarity of the first sort, no man in his senses could desire. And as to the latter, while it is certainly very valuable; yet, reaching no farther than bringing men to decide to become religious, it is no argument of ministerial greatness. It does not qualify a man to take his stand with those superior divines who, *after* they have instrumentally effected the conversion of their hearers, assist them to leave "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," and give up laying the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God; and to go on unto perfection, both as to the *knowledge* of divine things, and the *practice of holiness*. The congregations of him who merely arouses men, and brings them to set out for the kingdom of heaven, may be very large; and those of the man who edifies the church, besides bringing sinners to repentance, very small; but the sermons of the former have not that solidity and richness which distinguish the superior divine; nor do they so effectually secure the *continuance* of the converted in the faith of Christ. *Add* to this the very painful consideration of the numerous fallings away, declensions and backslidings of converts, made

under the ministry of the inferior though popular teacher, and you will see that popularity may exist without praiseworthy eminence.

It may be asked, how is it that if superior men, such as I refer to, convert sinners, that they should be less popular than the inferior ones, to whom I have alluded? I answer, that in every case which has come under my own notice, the conversions accomplished by superior men have been unattended and unincumbered by noise and ostentation; the converts having resolved not to disturb a congregation simply because they felt themselves penitent, but have *secretly* communed with God, and obtained his mercy; and as they made no audible and emphatic profession of their conversion at the time it occured, they could not so promptly bring renown to the preacher.

To account for the more extended popularity of inferior men, I might again remind you of their peculiarity of ministering to the gratification of hearers of a certain class. I mean such as delight in extravagant assertions, reiterated and stunning declamations about the fire of hell, and the torments of the damned; together with a repetition of tales of horror.

I could easily furnish other reasons, but shall add only one; and that is, a persuasion on the

part of their friends that they are ministers of extraordinary devotedness to God, and are favoured with new and continued revelations from heaven. As to the new revelations from heaven, my own conviction, and that of multitudes of sober christians, is, that the man who pretends to them, is utterly deluded, or impiously presumptuous.

With regard to the "deep piety," I must say something by way of caution. I have heard it repeatedly asserted of some ministers, that they spend many hours in succession in private prayer; and that some lay down flat on their faces four hours at a time in their closets, interceding for souls.

I beg to ask, how came this to be known? Did the ministers themselves give the information? If so they violated our Lord's injunction concerning secret prayer. We are to "enter into our closets and shut to the door," to exclude observation. But if we tell people what we do in our private prayers, they then become public.

If however the ministers in question did not give the information, we ask—did somebody look through the key-hole or crevice, or was the door a little open, that they might be seen? And if seen were they *heard* also?—for if they

were not heard how could it be proved that they were praying at all?

Now as we think it extremely unlikely that any humble minister should unfold the secrets of his private intercourse with God, and quite as unlikely that any person should stand four hours at a door watching him in privacy, we beg to question the whole account.

But suppose this to be true, there is nothing to commend, but much to blame in such a practice. It is unnecessary. Christians may "continue instant in prayer," and *work* for God at the same time. God requires no such practice, but he does require that ministers be diligent in *study* as well as prayer—that they visit the sick—"preach the word"—"endure hardness,"—and, if in an itinerant ministry, go to distant and little, as well as great, places, doing the entire work of evangelists.

I have listened to ministers endeavouring in their sermons to make the impression on their congregations, that they were more prayerful and holy, and much more intimate with God than others. And they have indirectly attributed their popularity and success, to their *holiness*. So did not Peter when the people in Solomon's porch greatly wondered at his cure of the lame man. "Why marvel ye at this?"

said the humble unostentatious apostle. "Or why look ye so earnestly on *us*, as though by our own power or *holiness*, we had made this man to walk?" I wish every popular minister to be duly respected, and his usefulness fully and generously recognized; but I would guard myself, and all men, against delusions;—and especially warn the churches of Great Britain against instituting invidious comparisons between good ministers on the score of *holiness*, lest we should lightly esteem thousands who are truly estimable in the sight of God, and applaud that which may not wear so good an aspect in the day when the "secrets of all hearts shall be revealed."

SECTION III.

THE peculiarities of some popular men however have been such as to lead us fairly to enquire. Do these promote christianity or not? Does the *popularity* resulting from these peculiarities give an impetus to the pure and wholesome truths of the new testament, or disseminate a mixture of truth and error, and an unhappy amalgamation of moral evil with moral good? Does not this popularity while alluring some to christianity repel others from it? It is absolutely impossible to hinder intelligent and discerning christians from putting these questions to themselves and to others. They are deeply concerned in the progress of our rational and holy and heavenly religion; and watch with godly jealousy every strange movement of preachers, and all eccentricities of opinion and practice in people. To be clearly understood, let me mention, in the *first place*, the pityful circumstance of the popularity of some being mainly attributable to a fine person, and graceful attitudes or gesticulation. The beautiful symmetry of the *arm*, so elegantly

extended, with the lady's hand, diamond ring, and snow-white wristband. I am neither satirical nor censorious. I blame no man for a genteel appearance, and becoming action in the pulpit. I *prefer* these when they do not extend to foppery. But it does a people no good to fix their admiration so very much on mere externals. It may excite a smile (but a smile that will do you no harm) when I say that some ministers were exceedingly popular when considered as "fine tall handsome young men, and unmarried," though their sermons were then meager and superficial to an almost extreme degree: but after being married and settled with a family, though their discourses were solidly instructive and enriched with every thing that *ought to be* interesting and esteemed, their popularity dwindled away. *This* popularity then, occasioned by prepossessing appearance, began and ended in *admiration of person;* and, as might have been expected, declined just as increasing years and an altered condition of life, rendered the preacher less attractive to his admirers. The thing to be lamented, in cases like this, is not the fineness of a man's person, nor the comparative littleness of his sermons, (for we cannot *generally* expect from young men the maturity of

age) but the poor taste and deficient piety of the hearers. The sad reversing the order of things.

It is no sin to admire young and superficial preachers; but it is a sin to neglect and despise mature and aged divines, whose learning and piety and abilities entitle them to be esteemed "very highly in love for their work's sake." A judicious christian believer would have liked the preaching of those young ministers Timothy and Titus; but I am much mistaken if he would not have preferred the ministrations of those elder and more competent apostles, saint Peter and saint Paul.

Let me, *secondly*, notice those preachers who have attracted crowds by being supposed to excel in the *pathos*;—making people cry by their touching facts and and anecdotes. Graphically describing sorrowful events and circumstances. Now it is certainly better to weep than to laugh under a sermon. But it should be well understood that we may weep under a sermon without being made better christians. Some peculiarly sensitive natures will weep at any thing that is pathetic, though it be somewhat that is comparatively trifling. And others though weeping at that which seems really to demand tears, can with singular rapidity dry

up their tears to laugh or to scold in their own habitations. The *pathetic* in preaching, when genuine and pregnant with noble thoughts, is a real excellency, and will sometimes draw tears even from the coldness of scholastic criticism. But when it is *affected*, though it may make a few weak persons cry, (and even this it very seldom does) it never fails in discerning minds to excite contempt and disgust. That eminent baptist minister the late Rev. Robert Hall used to relate a strange story of a preacher who was resolved to be pathetic. He inserted in the margin of his manuscript sermon in certain places the words "*cry here.*" And while preaching the sermon, when he came to these passages, he began to do something like crying; but the people seeing nothing to cry about, did not sympathize with him, and he had the pathos all to himself.

I myself witnessed a peculiarity in a *very* popular preacher which I hope never to witness again. In talking about *himself*, which he did nearly through the whole of an address *intended* to be a sermon, he suddenly broke out into an odd strain of *exclamation*, blessing God that he felt this and had done that; and while using a boisterous doxology of his own, commenced *a whine* in imitation of crying.—*Just*

a few entered into this—many were so deeply disgusted, as after the service, to censure his conduct in terms of unmeasured severity. By some he was unequivocally denounced as a *hypocrite*. I myself did not think him a hypocrite, but *I did* think, and think *now* that that trick of pretending to cry, while revolting to his serious and discerning hearers, was a great offence to Almighty God. Every thought, every emotion, every word, every tone, in the pulpit, should be identified with the *deepest sincerity*.

But the *true* pathos, as before hinted, is an excellency in preaching, and promotes the end we have in view. The sorrow or feeling which it occasions is comparatively silent, and altogether unostentatious. It corrects the asperities of our nature, and disposes us for the reception and cultivation of every great and virtuous principle. And thus our Saviour's lamentation over Jerusalem, and saint Paul's farewell address to the elders of Ephesus, being truly pathetic, were not only very affecting at the time in which they were spoken, but they sometimes affect us now, even to tears and weeping. § A preacher then who makes people cry about things *really* affecting, and especially about

§ See note A, at the end.

their evil doings, so as instantly to repent of, and relinquish them, does real service to christianity. But if they weep about they know not what, or because he weeps or tries to weep himself, it is mere useless emotion, and terminates in itself.

Thirdly, I would mention another sort of preachers, who are very popular because they make their hearers *laugh*. They say such "very funny things," as their admirers phrase it, that it is "impossible to help smiling." Now while we cannot deny that an occasional smile may consist very well with our edification under a sermon, particularly when occasioned by an *enlightening observation;* a frequent titter is both incongruous and profane. The unbridled wittiness that produces it, brings down the minister to a level with a player acting in comedy. Generally speaking, preachers who make people laugh under their sermons, are not distinguished for usefulness. There are exceptions. The Rev. Rowland Hill, and the Rev. Matthew Wilks, were what we term "*droll* preachers;" but they were men of great abilities, and very useful. Their oddities brought the very rabble to hear the gospel. "Lewd fellows of the baser sort" would be mightily entertained with their wit;

and at the same time seriously impressed and benefited with the more grave and solid parts of their discourses. Some have supposed that even these good ministers would have been more useful had they laid aside their drolleries. But this seems unlikely, because it was the very *oddity* of their preaching that secured the attendance of that class of hearers that could not be allured to the house of God by any other means. We should also consider that the mental constitution of these men was such as to render it, almost if not quite, impossible for them to preach in any other way. It is not proved that they *cultivated* their eccentricities, but their eccentricities would often break forth when they were endeavouring to avoid them. They were naturally and constitutionally peculiar men.

But there have been droll preachers of a very different sort from the excellent Rowland Hill and Matthew Wilks. Men who have degraded themselves by the *study* of oddities, and the wilful practice of buffoonery. Some for instance have made themselves the talk of a town or neighbourhood by taking their coats off in the pulpit—making wry faces at their hearers—sliding down the rails of pulpit stairs, to illustrate the sin of backsliding—making them-

selves merry with satan, by calling him ludicrous names; and by very many other pranks which it would defile this paper to particularize. Such men were mightily attractive to a certain class of people, and inexpressively repulsive to others. They had their *converts* too, who, like themselves, were far from being humble followers of Christ; but *strange* christians of an altogether indefinable and incomprehensible description. Self-sufficiency, rudeness, and obtrusive profession, however being their prominent peculiarities.

Ministers of the description now alluded to, have usually made a noise in the world for a few years, and have then sunk into oblivion; or if they have been remembered at all, remembered only to be pitied and despised. But yet I think that such men should not be *wholly* despised. If they have done good the good should be acknowledged. If they have done harm let it be regretted, and let us leave them and their proceedings to be judged of at the unerring tribunal of God. We content ourselves with saying that their popularity should be regarded as belonging to the *questionable* kind, and furnishing no demonstration whatever that they possessed any superiority, either mental or religious, to the rest of their brethren la-

bouring in the same vineyard. They happened to please people of a depraved taste. Their merry-andrew divinity suited the uncultivated minds and laughing propensities of their hearers; and if I *might* use the strong expression of a great man, § "their nonsense suited the people's nonsense," and thus they became to their own detriment, and to the discredit of christianity, *popular*. *Taste* in hearers may be so bad as to be even odious to healthy-minded christians. A taste or mental relish for sermons which contain little or no *solid instruction*—which comprehend ostentatious references to departments of science or literature which the speaker himself evidently does not understand—which are full of declamation and vehemence where the thoughts are *little*, and confusedly jumbled together; and which after being heard have not really increased our affection for the holy scriptures, and strengthened our determination to obey the commands of God. A relish for *such* sermons, I unhesitatingly pronounce to be injurious to the soul.

It is painfully remarkable, that persons who delight in this kind of preaching, are for the most part very restless and impatient under

§ Rev. R. Hall. See note B, at the end.

good and wholesome preaching; and they are not exactly the persons to whose conduct we should look for a full manifestation of the "fruits of the spirit." Their souls are not healthful. †

Another description of preachers, truly great in some respects, have rendered themselves popular by the deliberate affectation of an obsolete antiquated style of composition. Using the current phraseology in conversation, and quite another in the pulpit. I believe I am right when I say that *affectation* in the pulpit provokes, in some minds, a justifiable indignation.

Aping great men of by-gone days is a practice that will in the end ruin a well-earned pulpit reputation.

We can conceive no reason for this singular practice, but a determination to do something wonderful to divert the public attention from other ministers, and engross it all to ourselves. We may succeed for a time, but in the end our motive will be discovered, and the tide of popularity be turned.

I believe that the Rev. Edward Irving, who some years since flourished as a minister of the Scotch church in London, was a good and

† See note ❡, at the end.

superior man. He was thought well of by multitudes. Persons of the highest distinction in this kingdom constantly attended his ministry. And although his sermons were generally *read*, he surprisingly riveted the attention of his congregations. His sabbath discourses, when I heard him, were elaborate and impressive, but the *style* of them was borrowed from the writers of Milton, and the old nonconformists. It must have cost him as great pains to acquire this style, as I suppose it would cost me to adopt the phraseology of the society of friends. There was perhaps no *sin* in this whim of Mr. Irvings, but it was *unwise*, and subjected him to public criticisms and animadversions, which might have been all spared. It helped his fame for a while, and then (especially when his doctrinal errors began to be broached) diminished it.

Other preachers again have extended their fame for a time by odd methods of arranging their subjects, and by strong and extravagant, and not very chaste, expressions.

Even *holy* ministers have done this. Take an example which occurred so far back as the reign of king James the first.—The Right Rev. Joseph Hall, D. D. bishop of Norwich, and author of the justly-admired "Contemplations on

the historical passages of the old and new Testament," once preached at the court before king James. His subject was "the pool of Bethesda." In his introduction he says "Be content to spend this hour with me in the porches of Bethesda, and consider with me the topography—the aitiology—the chronography of this miracle."

In his application of the subject he observes "waiting is a familiar lesson with courtiers, and here we have all need of it: one is sick of an overflowing of the gall—another of a tumour of pride—another of the vertigo of lust—another of the vertigo of inconstancy—another of the choking sqinancy of curses and blasphemies: one of the boulimy of gluttony—another of the pleuritical stitches of envy: one of the contracting cramp of covetousness—another of the atrophy of unproficiency: one is hidebound with pride—another is consumed with emulation—another rotton with corrupt desires;—and we are so much the sicker if we feel not these distempers." What the king and his courtiers thought of this application I know not. Its faithfulness deserves commendation, but its oddness and filth were calculated to produce a mixture of levity and loathing.

No minister should have recourse to such extravagancies of expression, as in time they

might render the quality of his piety, as well as popularity, alike suspicious and questionable.

I have now finished the most uncomfortable part of my lecture, and leave all considerate christians to judge whether *popularity acquired by the ways I have mentioned,* is not a thing fairly to be *questioned.*

SECTION IV.

II. I am to consider the great importance and value of popularity in the christian ministry, when it is well deserved and judiciously applied.

On this part of the subject I shall use the term popularity, not in its strict sense as applying to the favour of the uninstructed multitude, but in the qualified and accommodated way in which it is so commonly applied in our own time: that is to say, the favour, generally speaking, of all classes. I should rather call this state of things, with a preacher, his *fame* or renown—built upon recognized and acknowledged excellencies of character and qualification. But to avoid confusion I shall keep to the term popularity.

In the new testament it is easy to perceive that the popularity of John the Baptist—of our Saviour and all his apostles, resulted from the infinite importance of their sayings, as well as doings, for the public good. Their was nothing pernicious in their fame. They propagated no

errors or delusions, but solid and eternal truths. They adopted no freaks and fancies to excite the public gaze; but were serious, good and worthy men. The way in which they conducted their ministry too, was the most unlikely (considering the prejudices of human nature) to ensure popularity.

John the baptist calling the Pharisees and Saducees "a generation of vipers," and warning them to "flee from the wrath to come," was a great demonstration that he courted no man's favour or applause; but desired every man's reformation.

Our Saviour designating the same class of men "a generation of vipers," and asking them, "how they could escape the damnation of hell," was a proof that he sought not glory of men, but to do the will of God. The baptist, the Saviour, and the apostles, were dead to human applause. And all distinguished moral reformers have for the most part been, (so far as we can judge) inattentive to it. The greatest divines in all ages who have excelled in preaching, and whose ministry has been attended by multitudes, appear to have been too much absorbed in the contemplation of their great *object*, (the salvation of souls) to notice with complacency their spreading fame.

Superior and truly religious minds cannot be taken with so *small* a thing as popularity. Such minds are truly thankful to God for large congregations, as they enlarge their sphere of usefulness; but they are careful to guard against that self-complacency which would say "these congregations are a compliment to your powers of eloquence."

Superior and religious minds cannot but know that the capabilities of the *greatest* men are very limited. That the public judgment and taste are not in every place and at all times correct. That a few persons possessing influence, and admiring in a preacher what does them no solid service, may by their opinions leaven a whole mass, and a dense multitude—and all may go wrong together. Men with *such* minds can therefore be easy and in no degree disconcerted when, upon some occasions, and in some places, they preach to a few. But the popularity of such, while not courted and fondly delighted in themselves, is highly important to the community. Had such men as Wesley, and Whitfield, and Adam Clarke, Andrew Fuller, and Robert Hall, with many others, been unpopular, they would have been but little known, and their usefulness most sadly contracted. But they became pop-

ular, and their services were widely extended. Thousands upon thousands will have to praise God in heaven that, attracted by the *fame* of these men, they went to hear them preach, and found their sermons the power of God to their salvation.

Now when popularity results from the exercise of superior talents and zeal in the preacher, it improves the public taste and the public morals. It increases the number of true christians, and promotes the honour and glory of God.

The popularity of superior ministers is always blended with usefulness, whether *immediate* good results are perceivable or not. It should never be said that superior popular preachers are not always the most useful. This however has often been most obstinately asserted. Whether the *propensity* to assert this arises from jealousy, or distaste, or prejudice, or fanaticism, or a preference given to pulpit vulgarities, I stay not to enquire; but the assertion is *untrue*, and I give it my flat and unequivocal contradiction.

When a truly great preacher is *good* as well as great, he is more useful than an inferior man, though we may not immediately *perceive* the fruit of his labours.

He may be inferior to less talented men, who have for their converts numbers of "stony ground" hearers, who hear the word with joy, and in time of temptation fall away.

But he is superior to such men as to the *quality* of the piety of those who are converted by his ministry. And even those who are not brought to *decision* under his preaching, are so held in *restraint* by the solemn *convictions* which his awakening and enlivening sermons produce upon their minds, that they do not "run to the same excess in sin" as formerly. The *partial* reformation of thousands is owing to the check given to their vices by sound and wholesome preaching.

Besides this, it will be found, that in the course of any considerable number of years, a talented and popular minister has not only brought many sinners to repentance, but instrumentally *preserved* thousands in the way of holiness which, under a less efficient ministry, would have declined and fallen away. We ought also to look at the *impetus* which an eminent minister gives to the mental industry and zeal of other preachers. We have a host of useful ministers, in this and in other countries, who, it is probable, would not have been preachers at all, much less good preachers, had they

not been privileged to hear, from time to time, the sermons of popular and gifted divines.

Again, we should consider, that the numerous conversations, criticisms and comments, which occur in serious families, and in social parties, respecting particular and extraordinary sermons, preached by the superior men in question, all tend to the spread of divine truth, and to render christianity a subject of high interest and general concern.

Who can calculate the amount of good done in this indirect way by the long established and well deserved popularity of superior preachers in our established church, amongst the Wesleyan methodists—independents—baptists and numerous other sects, not necessary to be mentioned.

Again, how often in the progress of years are scepticks and educated infidels obliged, most happily, to yield to the force of truth when preached by such men! Infidels whose pride and prejudices effectually hindered their conversion under men of an inferior description! *Facts* illustrative of this might easily be adduced but we think it unnecessary.

We *must* assert the superior usefulness of superior men, or come to the conclusion that God would rather put his sanction to the la-

bours of an ignorant and self-sufficient agency, than to the agencies of deep piety, honourable mental cultivation, and apostolic zeal. The ungenerous reflection too often indulged in that we do not *hear* of any good done, or *see* any good done, by such and such popular ministers, is a reflection upon which the Almighty frowns. If *we* do not hear of any good or see it, *others* will; and *future* generations, if not the present, shall rise to bear testimony to the gracious effects resulting, though remotely, from the faithful labours of the gifted man of God. And as to *present* good effects, who can tell that they are not realized *every time* a superior man preaches. The *subjects* of those effects, may not think it expedient immediately to declare their conversion, or their deliverance from the power of sin *after* conversion. They may question the propriety of publicly *announcing* their religious attainments; and *placarding* them on walls and in shop windows. § They may think it more consistent with the meekness and humility which should adorn the christian character, to let men find out for themselves that they are converted, by seeing, that though once they lived in sin, they have now renounced it, and can, by the assistance of the holy spirit,

§ This to grief of humble christians was done in Sheffield.

live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present world. *True* converts to the Lord Jesus Christ regard a pompous and blazing profession of great spiritual attainment, as being too much allied to primitive pharisaism, to warrant general confidence. And indeed the going about to *tell* men we are good and holy is perfectly unnecessary. If we are really so they will not fail to perceive it. "A city set on a hill" says our Saviour "cannot be hid." Neither can true and persevering piety be hid.

But if the conduct of men does not correspond with their profession, they must expect, when they tell us what great good they have got, to be asked this shrewd question.—"Why then did you not keep it."

Now I mean to insist upon it, that good effects do follow the labours of superior preachers; and that these good effects are in many instances permanent and extensive. This is particularly the case when the sermons which produced such blessed effects when delivered from the pulpit, are given to the public, through the medium of the press.

The Rev. James Saurin, a very eminent french preacher, was remarkable for extensive popularity and extensive usefulness. His preaching, it is said, resembled a plentiful

shower of dew, softly and imperceptibly insinuating itself into the minds of his numerous hearers, as the dew into the pores of plants, till the whole church was dissolved, and all in tears under his sermons. When this minister was settled at the Hague, he was constantly attended by a crowded and brilliant audience; and the effects of his labours were seen in the *holy lives* of *great numbers* of the people.

Again, and again, I say that *superior* popular ministers are always useful. Suppose a preacher to be remarkable for *devoutness and solemnity;* he then diffuses a love for the seriousness and becoming gravity of pulpit instruction, and gives a practical rebuke to the levity of careless and trifling hearers.

Suppose another to be popular on account of his beautiful imagery, powers of description, and general elevation of style: this man often brings home the hallowing truths of the gospel to the hearts of men, who receive those truths more readily under this kind of preaching than any other. Another minister shall be admired for his didactic style of preaching, and rendering himself very serviceable in the exposition of the scriptures; judiciously interpreting difficult texts, and dispelling the mists of error and delusion. This man does good by inspir-

ing a love for pure truth. Another shall be much followed for a highly impassioned and noble vehemence. This man arouses the dull and torpid, rebukes the sins of the age, and brings many sinners to God.

But truly great is he who possesses *all* these, and other good qualities, in combination.

Great is the man who can rise or fall with the occasion. Who can preach well and effectually to the learned and to the ignorant. And who can adapt himself to the wholesome, though diversified, tastes of his hearers. Who can with equal ease dispose men to pray, charm them into a practical acknowledgment of the truth, by his powers of imagination and description; shed a light upon scripture difficulties by his correct expositions, or alarm the slumbering sinner by his well-timed thundering. Happy is he who can talk instructively to the man of science, and to the little sunday scholar—who can be profoundly solemn, or innocently familiar in his sermons. Such an one is a great public blessing. He is truly a "light in the world." His congregations, particularly such among them as minister little or nothing to his support, are under great obligations to him. And should his life and labours be protracted to old age, he will be greeted in the hea-

venly world, by the grateful plaudits of thousands who were converted and helped to their reward by his valuable and effective ministrations. And whether he be permitted to *see* any considerable fruit of his labours in this world or not, he will see the fruit of them, to his joy and delight, in the world to come. Thousands of thoughtful and well-judging hearers will be found to have been instructed—persuaded—directed—comforted—and blest by his labours.

Numbers indeed of such hearers and "doers of the word" also may now be found by a little diligence of enquiry, mingling with the mass of christians, and quietly adorning christianity by the solid virtues of unostentatious private and domestic piety. Shewing by their well-ordered affections—uprightness and integrity in the world—steadiness in the church—and well-regulated families at home—that they have not heard the word of God in vain.

SECTION V.

III. Make some admonitory reflections :—

In the first place I remark that popularity, though valuable, is not *essential* to the success of the christian ministry.

The majority of preachers in all denominations are not popular, but they are acceptable and useful. Every pious pastor in the world is useful to the souls of men; and so is every pious local preacher in the Wesleyan and other connexions—they *never* preach in vain. Some of them are teachers and preachers of a superior order, but their excellencies are only perceived by the well-judging few. They do not bring men to religion in great numbers, but those that they do bring, become christians of the best sort.

There are degrees of excellence, and divers qualities, in christian character and habit, and the highest degrees of excellence in the exemplification of the best qualities, are usually manifested by those who embrace the truth for its *own* sake, and are much more attracted by

the excellency of the things *said*, than the mere manner of *saying* them. Christians who are the fruits of an *instructive* ministry, usually walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless; without fuss and grimace, and religious ostentation. An *instructive* preacher, though not followed by crowds, is very valuable to those to whom he does preach; and the select few who prefer his ministrations are often not only edified but delighted. Pious bishops and clergymen, ministers of dissenting congregations, and all travelling and local preachers, whose sermons are instructive, would do well to *consider* this for their comfort and encouragement.

Secondly: I observe that *popularity is sometimes dangerous*.

A popular man complimenting himself upon the real or supposed superiority of his preaching, and who is unwilling to hear anybody preach but himself, is most reprehensibly conceited. His spirit is the spirit of a play-actor. The bliss of an actor consists, in a very considerable degree, in the popularity which he enjoys, and the luxury of despising the comparative littleness of other men, and witnessing the comparative inattention of the public to their performances.

Self-love and self-admiration are the same qualities in a preacher as in an actor; only much more sinful in a preacher, because he by virtue of his office and profession pretends to avoid them: while the actor feels that they agree with the spirit of his profession.

In connexion with this fault I must mention another, and it is this:—popular ministers are sometimes disposed to *talk unnecessarily of their public engagements.*

Dr. Doddridge said "I would not purchase that phantom popularity, which is often owing to the worst part of a man's character or performances, by any compliances beneath the dignity of a christian minister; an office of which I think so highly, as to be deeply sensible how unworthy I am to bear it." I believe that in this statement the truly eminent Doddridge was sincere. And yet according to his biographer Dr. Andrew Kippis, he had "too ostentatious a manner of speaking concerning the multiplicity of his employments and engagements, and correspondence; and was fonder of applause, from every quarter, than was desirable in one who was so justly entitled to it—where applause was honour." §

It must be granted that the love of fame has

§ See note, C, at the end.

been the foundation of many great and noble achievments. Cicero loved fame, and was remarkable for the copiousness, diffusion and pathos of his eloquence. Many of the greatest men, in all ages, have been lovers of fame. Such of them as loved it inordinately, lessoned their greatness by their eagerness to increase it.

When fame however is loved as an instrument or medium of widely-extended usefulness, no man can be justly blamed for trying by fair means to acquire it. The love of fame is inseperable from excited genius; and many, in all ages, who have declaimed against it, have been remarkably fond of it themselves. Christianity does not encourage the love of fame and human applause. The fate of Herod, mentioned in the 12th of Acts, 21st and 23rd verses, is enough to terrify a man who is conscious of seeking applause as a christian minister. We are not sure however, that when our Lord blamed the Pharisees for loving the praise or honour that cometh from men *more* than the honour that cometh from God, he intended to denounce *all* love of human praise. Certainly we may love the praise of the wise and good; and especially may we love *their* praise, when we prefer to it immeasurably the commendation of Almighty God.

But apart from this speculation, the nature of christianity and its ministry suggests motives to exertion infinitely superior to the love of fame. These motives are the love of God, and compassion for the souls of men.

The dangerous tendency of a love of fame, as a principal motive to exertion in the work of preaching, is manifest from two considerations; the first is, that its chief design is not so much the salvation of men's souls, as the maintenance of mental superiority and pulpit influence: and thus a man's object is *himself*. The second consideration is, that the lover of fame studies to preach, not so much what the moral states and conditions of the people *need*, as what he thinks will be very pleasant and agreeable to them. And hence preachers of this sort deal with men's sins in so loose and general and wholesale a manner, that a sinner, hugging his besetments, may listen without alarm, because *his* sin is never specifically attacked; and its tendencies and consequences are not pointed out. And thus, for ought the lover of fame cares, the sinner may harden his neck and sink into perdition.

A minister of this sort may be much followed and applauded because "he preaches Christ," and dwells luminously upon the "atonement."

We know that this ought to be done; but we know also that, while we are very clever and orthodox and evangelical on *essential doctrines*, we may forget that christianity has its *precepts* and its *duties*. And that the *mind* that was in Christ, and the *example* he hath left us that we might imitate it, must also be insisted on. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk even as he walked"

I have noticed, with painful concern, that many of our pulpit orators never come to particulars with us. They seem more concerned to put us right about what we should *believe* than what we should *practise*. They seem so mightily afraid that we should charge them with preaching "justification by the works of the law," or by the "merit of good works," that even the very phrase "good works" seldom occurs in their sermons. Now then, I assert that no man *does* preach Christ after all, who does not insist upon the necessity of maintaining good works, and of imitating Christ's heavenly and illustrious example. Saint Paul, the great champion of the doctrine of "justification by faith," guards his doctrine from antinomian abuses, by directing Titus to "affirm *constantly* (not keeping the thing in the back ground, or talking about it merely on the an-

niversaries of benevolent societies) that they which have believed in God, might be careful to maintain GOOD WORKS." Titus iii. 8. I should like to write a book on this subject, as I abominate cant and false evangelism. But I shall close this topic by asking—how we are to account for so much *selfishness, injustice,* and other notorious transgressions of the overlooked and despised and insulted second commandment, amongst *religious* people? I answer, partly at least, from the notorious unpractical sermons of popular fame-loving preachers. Surely when a man's love of popularity is so intense that, to keep it up, he will venture upon omitting the "weightier matters of the law," and persuade people that religion chiefly consists in emotion, and knowing "the plan of salvation," his popularity is terribly dangerous, both to himself and his idolizing followers.

Thirdly: Popular preachers should not be regarded with feelings of jealousy or envy.

Envy is the vice of *little* minds, and when fostered in the human breast makes a man to resemble the devil; for just in proportion to the increase of *excellence* in the envied person, is the increase of hatred and abhorrence in him who envies. It is indeed some-

times very vexatious to see mulitudes running after a man who has little to recommend him but volubility and bluster, and deserting the ministrations of much better preachers; but even *such* a case should not disquiet us. If he preaches the *truth* and does *good* let us be heartily willing that he should enjoy his popularity in comfort. Let us neither say nor do anything directly or indirectly to disturb him, for this would be ungenerous and unkind. If he broaches error, he will, after a short reign of transient glory, come down of himself. But let us avoid the temptation to pull him down by uncharitableness and detraction. If we cannot conscientiously agree in opinion with his admirers, who sound his praise, and who teasingly extort from us our opinion, let us either be silent, or express our dissent in as few words as possible, and drop the subject; and if they are so irrational as to charge us with *envy*, we must bear their rudeness and insolence as well as we are able. But if a popular man be *deservedly* the object of public esteem, we should not only not be jealous of him, but join the public voice in bearing testimony to his excellence and usefulness. To refuse to do this is not amiable; and to adopt ingenious contrivances to hide him as

much as possible from the public view, whether by giving him unsuitable appointments, or refusing to publish him, is very dishonourable and anti-christian, § and a direct violation of the injunction to "render honour to whom honour is due." Rom. xii. 12, 13.

Fourthly: we should wisely *improve* the privilege of hearing eminent and popular ministers, by resolving to live entirely devoted to God.

Thousands doubtless would bitterly regret the non-improvement of the ministry of Jesus Christ and the holy apostles. And thousands in all ages of the church, have frequently heard the holiest and most talented and useful ministers, without repenting of their sins.

And here I come to another point. A question of consequence to every man living. Whose *fault* is it that an able and well-conducted ministry is, in some cases, not attended with the immediate conversion of sinners to God? And *how* is it that the preaching of the gospel by men who understand it in all its doctrines, precepts, and commands—its threatnings and its promises, does not effect the subversion of every vice of the human heart and conduct?

Too many blame the preachers themselves;

§ See note E, at the end.

and if such preachers live sinful lives they ought at least to share in the blame. But I proceed on the supposition of the preachers being *good* men. How is it then that *their* ministry does not always produce *immediate good effects*, and result in the immediate and visible reformation of the sinner? "O" says the complainer, "there is a defect *somewhere*."—"The minister does not pray enough, or he is not a revivalist, § or there is something amiss." Now mark you! Proceeding on the supposition that the minister, a popular, talented, laborious man, is a good christian—very anxious to be useful, and labouring to be so;—the fault is *not in him*.—The fault is in the sinner himself—in the besotted stupidity—obstinacy and desperate unwillingness which he feels and cherishes to give up his sins. This very same thing, called in the scriptures unbelief or disobedience, limited the good effects of our Saviour's ministry; and stood in the way to abridge the usefulness of the apostolic ministry.

We allow that faults in popular ministers, and great deficiencies as to spirituality and zeal, are *partial* hindrances to the conversion of sinful men. But the main hindrance has *ever been*, and is now, in the sinner's own

§ See note F, at the end.

heart—in his rebellious determination not to repent *now*, and come unto Christ that he may be saved.

But we must say two things here. *First:* the labours of some popular ministers, though *not known* to be attended with the *immediate* conversion of sinners, are always blest to the edification of saints. This I have hinted before. And surely the persevering in the ways of obedience after conversion is a matter of great importance; and without a *building up* ministry, converts could not be expected to advance to the attainment of christian perfection. And many would fall away altogether.

Secondly: the labours of a popular minister, who "labours on at God's command, and offers all his works to him," will meet with a glorious reward in heaven. "Every man" in the ministry "shall receive his own reward according to his own labour." God loves labourers in his vineyard, whether men love them or not. And it must be the case. It cannot be that because a superficial, noisy and lazy man (I mean a man who reads little and studies less) is sometimes accidentally useful in the conversion of sinners, he is therefore *equally* acceptable to God with the man who labours day and night to bring out of his treasury things new

and old—whose heart and head too are always in his work. We ourselves respect industrious men, and God does the same thing. The very principle of industry as applied to a good object, is a real virtue: more especially when this principle operates amidst all difficulties and discouragements. I mean this—when a man cultivates his mind and improves his preaching, though perpetually subjected to the inconvenience of travelling on foot, in all kinds of weather; and often lodging in obscure cottages where, though he meets with kindness and attention, the state of things renders effective study impracticable. We hear much of the *labours* of favoured and favourite ministers, whose "great labours" are exclusively confined to exertions in splendid chapels; but who ride home in chariots, and have their retirements in elegant drawing rooms, or comfortable libraries. *This* kind of labour, with some of us, would be the labour of mental and religious *luxury*—the very essence of intellectual and spiritual enjoyment. Well it is labour and will be rewarded. But hundreds of superior ministers know something of the *rough work* of the ministry—facing the storm and the tempest—trudging the deep snow—walking on some occasions through the water-floods—

preaching with rain running down pulpit stairs off our clothes—walking eight or ten miles in the dark after preaching:—*this* work more or less for twenty years in succession. This, in connexion with the labours of the mind and voice, is truly speaking *labour*, and will receive its reward in a better world. Now if there are those who are not benefited by our industry, when we are always striving to benefit them, and praying to God that they may be benefited; the fault is *their own*. They are great sinners, and should they persevere to the end of life in the non-improvement of our ministry, they will be *lost*. The vengeance of God will come down upon them; for we are assured that the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking *vengeance* on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel.

Let us then improve by the ministry of the gospel. If men of singular eminence in the ministry are not permitted to locate amongst us, we still have the true ministry of the word—the glorious gospel of the Son of God. Let us believe it with all our hearts. Let us obey it in all the conduct of our lives; and it will be the power of God to our present and eternal salvation. Let us bear in mind that the *good*

minister seperates himself from the ordinary business of life; and sometimes from prospects of wealth and affluence—*for us*. Let us consider that he studies, travels and labours, for *us*. True it is, he is exempt from the manual labours, occupations and anxieties of business. But he has *mental* labours, occupations and anxieties; and, if comparatively poor, more anxieties than many people know of. Yet he pursues his labours, and bears his anxieties *for us*. And, amidst all the varied scenes of this mortal life, preaches Christ, "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

The *right* improvement of this ministry is the immediate acceptance of the gospel—*believing* all its doctrines—*renouncing* all thoughts, words, and works, which it declares to be sinful—*practising* all the virtues and duties which it declares to be holy and just and good. *Thus* to improve it, is to be in immediate readiness for death, judgment, and a glorious immortality.

SUPPLEMENTARY PARTICULARS.

I have now to notice some things which contribute to the effectiveness of a popular minister's public services, and to the tranquillity of his mind as a christian philosopher. What I have to say relative to his public services, I shall address to the people: what I have to say relative to christian philosophy, I shall address to the minister himself.

On the *first* department of this supplement then, I would have christian people, who love plain dealing to CONSIDER TEN THINGS.

First: If you want your ministers to conduct your devotions, and preach to you with superior effect;—*come to public worship in due time.*

Late attendance has long been as common as it is disgraceful and sinful.

Get my tract on this subject, published by Hamilton, Adams and Co., London; and sold by Mr. J. Slater, Ironbridge; Mr. Saxton, Sheffield; or of any bookseller.

The punctual minister will be sure to be in

time himself. Let him have the comfort therefore, when he ascends the reading desk or pulpit stairs, to see you all in your seats, ready to begin with him to worship God "in spirit and in truth."

Always be in time, unless something happens occasionally to render it impossible. And when females come with pattens, they ought in all conscience to take them off at the door, and carry them to their seats; it is a shame to make a clatter with pattens in public worship. Musical instruments should be tuned, and sunday-school children brought in five minutes before the service.

Second; mind what you do about bringing *infants* to public worship.

Fidgitty, playing, or crying infants, have often utterly ruined sermons. The ministers having found it impossible to proceed well, while they are making a noise. We love infants tenderly, but they ought not to be brought to public worship unless they are very quiet. it is better for a good woman sometimes to miss a sermon, than for a whole congregation to be disturbed in hearing it. It is impossible for a minister to make a good impression while a child is crying. His congregation looks with disturbed attention on the child and not on

him; and the mother herself cannot possibly derive benefit while engaged in fruitless efforts to quiet her child. Where there is no servant, the husband should take turns with the wife in going to worship and minding the child at home. Door-keepers and pew-openers should endeavour to get noisy children removed, and not oblige the minister to violate decorum in speaking about them from the pulpit. If females will bring infants, they should not be so unwise as to push themselves into places from which they cannot get out without going the whole length of a church or chapel.

But what are poor mothers to do, whose husbands will not every other sunday stay at home and mind the child?

I answer, if the child is apt to be quiet, bring it: but by all means sit near the vestry, or church or chapel door; so that if the little one becomes troublesome, you may go into the vestry, or go home. You will say this is a hard case. So it is. But of two evils we should choose the least. It is an evil for a woman to miss public worship, on account of a noisy child; but a much greater evil, as I said before, for a whole congregation to be disturbed by its crying.

Third: let the house of God be well lighted.

Where candles are used, they should be clean, and long enough to last through the service: when they are not so, they go out, and make a stench and darkness.

I have seen pulpit candles that have been gnawed by rats or mice, and all besmeared with coal dust. O shame! Always snuff the candles during the singing before sermon, and mind you do not snuff them out.

Fourth: places of worship should be kept cool in summer, without a draft; and warm in winter, without stewing or melting the congregation.

Drafts are even dreadful. People get colds and stiff necks by them. Some ministers have lost their hearing through them. Now I pray you mind this: and take especial care not to have broken windows, or to allow people in winter to be continually leaving doors half-open.

Fifth: do not bring dogs to places of worship.

Some dogs behave better than their masters; but they too often run about, and poke their noses into pews, and amuse people. Pray keep them at home.

Sixth: the house of God should be kept very clean.

I have seen some chapels most detestably dirty. I have seen the pulpit bibles covered with thick damp dust. The pulpit seats covered with half-eaten apples—tattered spelling-books, and bits of candle! All this is shocking.

Seventh: door-keepers should attend to their duty.

Not allowing rude persons and children to gossip and play just outside the door, and in the lobby, during the service. Neither should any body be allowed to stare in at the windows. Keep the blinds down.

Eighth: people should remain till the end of the service, unless obliged to go out from necessity.

I do not commend ministers for preaching long sermons, unless they are of a superior order, or preached on anniversary occasions: but we lament that, when sermons are short, so many persons should, from mere habit, always leave before the concluding prayer and benediction. Such conduct is profane.

Ninth: persons should never talk while the minister is preaching, or giving out hymns.

Some good preachers endure an agony of embarrassment, when disturbed by this talking. I have myself heard religious persons, merely from habit, make a groaning and even

grunting, more or less, all through a sermon. I have even dreaded to preach in chapels where these noises are heard. If religious people want to express, or give vent to, their religious feelings, they cannot do it better than at the end of important sentences, in prayer, and in singing the psalms or hymns. We use psalms and hymns for the very purpose of giving audible expression to our devout feelings.

Tenth: when a solemn influence rests upon a congregation, under a sermon, take care not to spoil it.

This has been often done by self-inspired excitement; and by persons doing strange things, to render themselves conspicuous and particular.

I have known persons to stamp with their feet—to hammer with their hands—to distort their countenances, or "disfigure their faces;" and to put themselves into unseemly postures. This is right or it is wrong! If right, then all in the congregation may do it: and if *all* were to stamp and hammer—to distort their countenances, and put themselves into unseemly postures,—would not such a congregation appear, to a stranger coming in, like a company of mad people? Certainly they would.

Saint Paul in his day reproved the Corinth-

ians for the improper use even of miraculous gifts. "if therefore" says he "the whole church be come together, and all speak with tongues; and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers—will they not say ye are mad." P 1 Cor. xiv. 23.

In the use of tongues the Corinthians were instructed to have only two, or at the most three, to speak in one meeting; and these were to speak not altogether, but one after the other: and they were not to speak without an interpreter. "But if there be no interpreter" (says the apostle) "let him keep silence in the church, and let him speak to himself and to God. See 1 Cor. xiv. 27, 28.

In prophesying also, interruption of speakers was positively forbidden.

Even when something was revealed to a man, he was not allowed to speak while another was speaking, but to be still till the other had done. (See 1 Cor. xiv. 30.) "For God" says Saint Paul "is not the author of confusion" (or tumult as the margin renders it), "but of peace." 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

Now then, if men miraculously learned and inspired, in the primitive churches, were to submit to order and discipline in the exercise of real gifts; how infinitely reasonable is it

that the noise and oddities I have mentioned should be suppressed! I love the "hearty amen" as it is called, and I love spiritual animation in public worship; but I want amens and animation to be so managed as to tend to edification, and not to confusion. I am deeply and seriously concerned about this. I have known serious families, liberal to the cause of God, obliged to give up their seats through irregularities and disturbances in some chapels, and they have gone to join other churches, where they could worship God in peace.

Now my brethren I want serious people retained and not driven from us. I want infidels converted, and not disgusted.

Perhaps you will say "there was noise and confusion in the revival on the day of pentecost." I tell you that there was no such noise and confusion as some people make in the manner I have stated. There was no such noise and confusion as I have, to the heavy grief of my soul, witnessed in some rude and undisciplined congregations. I have no room in my little book to discuss this subject at full length; but I may say that under Peter's sermon, the persons convinced of the enormous sin of crucifying Christ, simply *said*, with solemn earnestness, "men and brethren what

shall we do?" And Peter told them what to do, namely, "to repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of their sins." (Acts ii. 37, 38.) And so far as I can judge they then became quiet.

Now this is a very different thing from making a continuous clamour, and interrupting a preacher's sermon.

Peter's sermon was distinctly heard all through; and there is no proof whatever that after the penitents that "were pricked in their hearts" had received their directions from Peter, that they kept on making a din and confusion.

Charge me not then with checking your devout feelings. I do *not* check devout feelings, for no feeling can possibly be scripturally devout that is irrational and ludicrous.

Be lively then but be *sober*.

Avoid dulness and deadness and formality, but avoid extravagance; and do not fancy that either you yourselves, or any of your neighbours, are cold and dead, merely because you and they are not noisy and boisterous.

Perhaps you will not be offended with me if I affectionately recommend you not to put "*er*" at the end of your words in praying, where it is not wanted.

Do not say "O-*er*"—"Lord-*er*"—"pardon-*er*"—"our-*er*"—"sins-*er*;"—but, "O Lord pardon our sins!"

Have the goodness also to pay respect to the letter "*h*." Dont make that letter work without necessity, and refuse to use it where it is wanted.

In my "Short Hints to Preachers and Hearers" (sold by Mr. Kemp, of Beverley, in Yorkshire) I have noticed this fault. It is a pity to say "*h*our father which *h*art in *evv*en," when we should say "our father which art in heaven." Dont say "*h*airs of God and joint *h*airs with Christ," where you should say "heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ;" but pronounce the word "*heirs*" without the aspiration—that is "*ares*," or as if you had to say "*airs*."

On account of excessive forwardness and extravagance, many christians have been known to say very foolish things, in the solemn exercise of prayer.

I could give you many extraordinary facts, proving that downright nonsense has been spoken in public worship; but I will not pain either your minds or my own by their insertion.

In prayer our language should be plain, with-

out vulgarity; and chaste, without a vain affectation of elegance. The more we pray in the language of holy scripture, the better.

Now are you willing to *consider these ten things*—seriously, and without being offended? If you will but consider them carefully and prayerfully, I am sure that the public services of popular ministers, yea, all good ministers, will become increasingly beneficial.

Do you say that I am "over nice and particular?" I beg to assure you that I am not. I wish to check nothing but what is absurd and injurious. I would not check any christian for his fervour; or for using a pious, but subdued and solemn, exclamation of approval, at the close of any specially important and impressive sentence, in a prayer or a sermon: but I would have him to understand that, in public worship, respect is due to Almighty God—to the minister—and to the congregation; and that the great point for us all to consider is, that we should govern our feelings, and not be governed by them.

Try to do this, and you will find, that while enjoying a purer devotion yourself, you will not disturb the devotions of others.

You will surely see this to be important, when you are reminded that some private

christians, and christian preachers have, by extravagance and excessive loudness, made themselves dangerously ill, and ultimately lost their lives. Mr. Wesley used to call such christians "*martyrs to bawling.*"

I now come to the *second* department of my supplement, which I shall respectfully address to popular ministers; and to ministers younger than myself.

And here, according to previous intimation, I have to speak of some things which will help a young minister, in the midst of his popularity, to preserve the tranquility of his mind as a christian philosopher.

First: he should take it for granted that, although his ministry in general may be universally acceptable, or nearly so, yet some of his sermons will not be admired by all, and a few of them censured by many.

Let him clearly understand this, and be reconciled to it; and then he will not be diconcerted when people find fault with him.

The popular Richard Baxter says—"few sermons that I preach, but one extolleth them, and wisheth they were printed; and another accuseth them of some heinous fault. Some men are pleased with clearness and accuracy of doctrine; and others account it too *high*,

and say we shoot over the hearers' heads, and like nothing but the fervent application of what they knew before. Most hearers are displeased with what they most need: if they err they reproach that doctrine as erroneous that would cure them. If they are guilty of any prevailing distemper and sin, they take that application to be injurious to them, which would convince them, and save them from that guilt. Most are pleased with plain and zealous reproof of sin, but it must be other men's sins and not their own. The poor love to hear of the evil of oppression and unmercifulness—of pride, fulness and idleness, and all the sins of the rich. Subjects love to hear of their rulers' faults, and say—'O this man is no flatterer, he dares tell the greatest of themselves;' but if they hear of their own, they take it for an injury. Rulers like a sermon for submission and obedience; but how few love to hear of the evil of injustice and oppression—of pride and sensuality." &c.

Since the stirring times of Baxter, we find the impossibility of pleasing every body just the same.

Be reconciled to this brother minister, and your spirit will be quiet.

Secondly: the popular minister should not

indulge the vain fancy that popularity is the high road to ecclesiastical promotion.

In some cases great abilities and usefulness are rewarded by the favours of leading authorities in churches, but in others it is quite the reverse. Consider then, that their are men of influence and authority who do not care to hear one word about your achievments. From such expect just nothing, and then, in getting nothing, you will not be disappointed.

You may indeed live in the affections of multitudes. Your versatility of talent may be brought into constant requisition by the churches of your own and other communions; and your labours be more abundant than those of many well-conditioned ministers, and promotion be ever in promise and in prospect, but *never realized.* The fact cannot be concealed, that an equitable distribution of temporalities is far from being universal, either in the established churches, or amongst seceders and dissenters. You may fancy that superior ministers, without private property, ought, in all conscience, to be appointed to places where the contributions to the support of themselves and their families are decidedly liberal: and you may think that if so appointed, they would only have to preserve their piety to become

"burning and shining lights;" and that in easy circumstances they would prosecute their studies and labours with comfort, delight and efficiency.

You may imagine that while it is certainly proper that superior men should *sometimes* take a turn in preaching to village and cottage congregations, yet, to make them spend very many years in doing this work, which could be done as well by inferior men, is to cause superior men to waste their time; and to deprive the christian world of its right. But such fancying and imagining will not advance you one step.

It may astonish and confound you to see *very* young ministers, who have done almost nothing for the communities to which they belong, advanced prematurely to posts of honour; and you yourself, after many years of toil, left to do the hard work and rough work. But your being astonished and confounded will "bring no grist to your mill," that is, will not advance your salary one shilling, or elevate your standing one inch.

And if you *talk* much of these things, there will always be men enough to ask you what it is you think of yourself, that you are not satisfied. Some will tell you that you estimate

your qualifications too highly. Tens of thousands think and say you should "go up higher," and wonder "*what it is* that keeps you low." A few who do not like you, say you are in your proper place, and will use their influence to keep you on what they call "your proper level." Such men will also talk very gravely about the arrangements of *providence* in the settlement of ministers, though these men ought to know that providence often *permits* what providence does not approve; and that providence cannot approve of notorious and deliberate injustice. These men will lay a formidable stress on the "mote in your eye," § and wish you would let them pull it out. They will tell you that this *mote* (some oddity or eccentricity so *called)* prevents your elevation in the church. You may tell them rationally enough that this mote *ought not* to hinder your elevation; and that you see *other* men with motes, and *beams* too, who are wonderfully caressed, and handsomely provided for. But your opponents hold to their opinion, to justify their determination to elbow you out of every opening to advancement. You may think of very many and weighty reasons for your elevation: but let these reasons alone: instead of

§ See note ⁂, at the end.

indulging in gloomy ruminations, as you will sometimes be tempted to do on sabbath evenings after tramping through mud and rain or deep snow twenty miles, to preach in cottages and hovels, while spruce men with not half your talent and double your salary have been "figuring away" in cathedrals or splendid chapels,—go to bed, and *dream*, not of fame or fat livings, but of *heaven*, where *labourers* in God's vineyard, with their toils and hardships ungenerously overlooked, will have their due reward.

But amidst all your uncomfortable musings, be seriously attentive to two things.

First; never attribute your non-elevation to the great body of ministers of which you are a member; for in that body you may have a large number of cordial friends, who have no control over the final decisions respecting your station; and these decisions may be come to with reluctance, and as the result of insinuation, or of eloquence, employed against you in your absence.

Second; do not murmer amonst the people in your sphere of labour, but love them, and do them all the good you can.

Take care also, honourably to keep the rules and dicipline of your church or connexion. If

some neglect their duty to you, that is no reason why you should neglect your duty to God, and your people.

Yield also reasonable submission to your ecclesiastical superiors.

However painful it may be to your feelings to have your friends expressing their *surprise* at your not being promoted, and expressing it in such *a way*, as if they thought you had done some mischief somewhere or at sometime—dont be miserable and angry, but go on with your duty, and do all the work of an evangelist, as if nothing particular had ever happened to you. In so doing *God* will be for you, whoever may be against you, Resources of happiness in a man's own mind and conscience—in the integrity and uprightness which preserves him—in the endearments of his own loved family—in the conscious approbation of God—and in the assured approbation of all or nearly all who attend his preaching, are amply sufficient to bear him up under the scowlings of jealousy, and the practical contempt with which, as a public character, his pretended friends, but real enemies, may treat him.

Thirdly: if you find your studies and devotions interrupted by an undue elevation of spirit, on seeing your name placarded on pub-

lic walls and in shop windows, for anniversary services, and in seeing notices of your sermons and speeches in public newspapers,—cool yourself down a little by recollecting that, on the one hand, many a man superior to yourself is thus noticed, and, on the other, that this kind of notoriety is very cheap:—that the religious public have been for years past so good natured as to allow *almost any body* to preach and make speeches:—that while Demosthenes himself on great occasions would *tremble* before addressing the Athenien republic, there are men in our day not able to read or spell so well as some school boys, called "*reverends*," who, hit or miss, will dogmatize to their heart's content without fear before any assembly. We live in a *talking* age, and have such multitudes of preachers, lecturers, and speech-makers, that unless you can do something most decidedly wonderful, people will not know where you are, or what you are doing. Do not therefore conclude yourself a great man because your name sticks upon a wall in great letters. At the same time enjoy the comfort of not being "overlooked." You may also bear in mind, that there are hundreds of millions of people on this globe who do not know that you are in existence.

Fourthly: do you possess a *diploma*, and while enjoying the congratulations of your friends who think you deserve it, find yourself obliged to encounter hints and inuendos which seem to say your title is misplaced? Reason yourself into tranquility. If you have *earned* your title you have a right to it.

Many years ago the title of "D. D." used to be earned by the acquisition and developement of solid learning; and even now the universities of Oxford and Cambridge generally demand a latin sermon, preached with grammatical accuracy, as indispensable to the obtaining a "D. D." But great learning in our times is not always an indispensable requisition to the attainment of literary honours.

A fund of general information—a gift of speaking well in public, and the production of a good book, are qualifications which have, in some instances, been deemed sufficient to justify some literary institutions in calling men doctors of divinity.

There is reason to apprehend however, that the interests of learning and christianity may suffer by the facility with which these honours are attained. But perhaps we may now depart from the old way of thinking on this subject.

We may conclude that a man, however learn-

ed, should not be styled a doctor unless he can "teach others also;" and that he should be, as his title imports, a *teacher*. We may admire and revere him for the *possession* of classical and oriental learning, having given proof of it by passing his college examination; but if through some unhappy defect he cannot *efficiently teach in public*, he is improperly called a doctor.

We may also conclude that a man who is *not* able to read greek and latin, and the hebrew bible, yet, *teaching* the great essentials of christianity with accuracy, fluency, eloquence, and effect—*is* a doctor of divinity whether so called or not. But if so called it is simply by courtesy and compliment, and this does not give universal satisfaction. We want some *distinguishing* excellency—some decided and demonstrate evidence of superiority to preachers in general, to shew that a divinity title is rightly appropriated. Well then suppose I say we have it here:—

A man is an eloquent preacher—an extensive reader—a profound thinker—and, a respectable writer. He possesses also *some* knowledge of the dead languages. He can hammer out the meaning of a hebrew or greek text, by the assistance of his grammar and lexicon. He

possesses also a slight acquaintance with other languages; and, though a superficial scholar, he has the happy art of making his knowledge (defective as it is) serviceable to the religion of which he is a minister.

If *such* are his qualifications, and he has received a diploma, we should in all fairness *recognize* his honour, and allow him to possess it in comfort.

Now, brother minister, if, with the above-mentioned acquirements and capabilities, you possess a diploma, be happy in your mind, though people may rather freely express their opinions, and talk about you and your title in a queer kind of way.

Fifthly: are you a very young man, much esteemed, and likely to *accept* a diploma if offered, though inwardly conscious of inferior scholarship?

Consider, I respectfully beseech you, the inconveniences of accepting one under such circumstances.

Should you once be made a doctor, every well-bred man is obliged to call you "doctor," whether he likes to do so or not; and can you enjoy a grudged title?

If you become a doctor, you make yourself responsible to the public for a certain

amount of learning, which, if on examination, you be found not to possess, you will be subjected to remarks and reflections, disturbing to your own mind, and hurtful to your literary reputation. Unkind persons may ask you whether you think yourself something like Calmet, or bishop Pearson—Du Pin, or Dr. Cave—whether you conceive that you somewhat resemble Bates, or Charnock—Tillotson, or Isaac Barrow—whether you are equal to Jeremy Taylor, or bishop Hall—or if you can do as much as Watts, or Doddridge—Dr. A. Clark, and the Rev. John Wesley? All these men and a hundred others that might be mentioned, obtained their honours through the medium of herculean literary labours, and the production of large and numerous volumes of solid erudition, which will render their names venerable to the latest generations. Think also that Wesley, though eminently deserving it, was not colled *doctor* Wesley, but "the Rev. John Wesley, A. M.;"—and will *you* be a *doctor?*

Be aware also that the grammarians and hypercritics may come upon you, and plague you almost to death, by asking you "whether you have settled the controversy about the hebrew points?"—"whether you are very familiar with the greek dialects?"—"whether

you can decline nouns and conjugate verbs, and read authors in their originals, without making blunders?"—or, "whether *at a glance* yon can interpret those ugly-looking things, the 'abbreviations and contractions' of the greek tongue?"

I might also add, that if the preservation of popularity be your object, a diploma is not likely to secure it.

The public at large are now very little influenced by appendages to a preacher's name. And although they ought to be so far influenced as to shew respect to every man who wears a deserved title, it is too often seen that doctors preach to small congregations, and *no* doctors to large ones.

Preach good sermons, and you will be esteemed as much without as with a diploma.

If universities and colleges choose to bestow titles on *senior* ministers who have rendered important services to the churches, without any rigid adherence to ancient methods of investigation, I will cheerfully conclude that they have reasons for so doing: and I am always prepared to shew to such men that respect and politeness to which literary institutions have deemed them justly intitled.

And, although I have used my liberty in ex-

pressing my opinions on this delicate topic in the same way that people take liberties with my own public doings, I have learned long since not to envy any man, but to rejoice in every man's attainments, honours and popularity, who "does justly loves mercy, and walks humbly with his God."

Permit me also to say here that I am at a loss to understand why the classical and mathematical scholar should be so highly dignified, and the english scholar, though possessing knowledge which the former has not *had time* to acquire, have no titled honours at all.

NOTES.

NOTE A. Doddridge in his note on John vii. 1, refers his readers to Plutarch, who mentions it as a memorable proof of the extraordinary eloquence of Mark Antony when Marius sent soldiers to kill him, that, when he began "*to plead for his life*, he disarmed their resolution, and melted them into tears." This pleading was the *true* pathos.

Note B. I very much enjoy the writings of that prince of pulpit orators, Robert Hall; but I do not so much admire some of his strong *off-hand sayings*. Young preachers should take care not to be misled in their judgment by the *short sayings of great men*. These sayings too often contain a mixture of truth and error. For instance, when Mr. Hall pronounced the writings of Dr. John Owen "*a continent of mud*," he said too much.

Owen is indeed tedious, circumlocutory and parenthetical, and disfigures his pages by the too frequent use of italics, and by plastering his margins with loads of latin and greek authori-

ties, and often without necessity; yet, nevertheless, his works prove him to have been a man of profound learning—deep acquaintance with the scriptures—and capable of furnishing his readers with a world of useful information.

Note C. *Philip of Macedon* was not the most scrupulous in his choice of the means which were to procure him a solid reputation. He was, as an orator, vain of his eloquence; and this vanity was noticed very much to his detriment.

Demosthenes enjoyed the commendations even of a poor herb woman.

Tully so carefully laid hold of every opportunity to talk of himself, as to become insupportable. He pressed a friend to write the history of his consulship, and publish it in his life-time, that he might personally enjoy his glory and reputation.

On the subject of *loving the praise of men*, I am persuaded the human mind is at fault to determine, with precision, whether in all cases it is sinful, and if so, whether in such a *degree* sinful, as to endanger our salvation.

Wilberforce somewhere in his "Practical Christianity," speaks much against it, as contrary to piety; but yet, it would have been a fair question to have asked that eminent wri-

ter, whether he himself did not earnestly desire that his popular book on "Practical Christianity" should become famous in the christian world: and that he himself should be known as the writer of it?

Every author, who does not write anonymously, naturally, and, so to speak, necessarily, wishes his work or works to be known and applauded. And how can he be justly blamed for this?

Suppose now that any superior production of the present day, say "Stamp's Martyrology," should become a favourite with the public, both at home and abroad—suppose it should run through successive editions, and be translated into all living languages—suppose that the Pope of Rome and the Emperor of China should order copies by thousands—suppose that the President of the United States, and the heads of Oxford and Cambridge universities, should make handsome proposals for the copyright—suppose a hundred things in its favour—who could prove that the author would *sin* should he be pleased with such deserved compliments to his learning and labours? None could prove it.

To conclude this note, I may I think come near the mark respecting the matter of loving

the praise of men, if I say that to preach a sermon—to deliver a speech—to publish a book, *for the sake* of being admired and commended, is a sin; but when we preach sermons—make speeches, and write books, for the sole and exclusive purpose of doing good, it is no sin, when admired and commended, to be pleased with admiration and commendation, if our pleasure be moderate, and the result of *gratitude* to the public, rather than a disposition to commend one's self.

I may add that it is a dangerous thing to judge harshly respecting men's *motives* for doing things in public. We ought to conclude that they are influenced by *good* motives, if we cannot *prove* that they are instigated by bad ones.

Note D. "A mote"—"a beam." Having several times delivered a lengthened discourse on censoriousness, I omit, at present, all painstaking criticism on the above figurative words, except to say that a "*mote*" means a small fault, and a "*beam*" a large one.

Amongst other peculiarities deemed objectionable in ministers, one is, the being, what is called "*light and trifling*;" and when ministers are *really* so, they are to be blamed. But some are unjustly accused of this, because

they are constitutionally humourous and facetious. Now a humourous minister, duly managing his humour, is not "light and trifling." His peculiarity is not even a "*mote*." It is no fault at all: and no competent new testament critic, uninfluenced by superstition, can prove it to be so.

But suppose that I am in error, and that it is a fault to be witty. This fault is still but a "*mote*." And if so, how is it that men, called "deeply pious," dare to stigmatize, degrade, and injure, the public character and temporal interests of their brethren, on account of their wit?

What! is it really come to this—that ministers of solid worth, laborious, successful, and regarded with sincere affection by all the churches and congregations to whom they have administered the word of life—are to be deprived of means adequately to support their families, simply because they are witty?

Now as I happen to have verbal and written evidence that worthy ministers have been, for very many years, doomed to suffer for their wit, I shall take upon myself to say, that the parties engaged in making them suffer, have, in God's account, "*beams*" *in their eyes*. And that such parties will have tremendous diffi-

culty in shielding themselves against our Lord's charge of hypocrisy. (Matt. vii. 5.)

Too long alas! has it been the case that men of grave countenances, and speaking softly, and dealing much in religious phrases, have been accounted eminently pious, and deeply devoted to God; while other christians, naturally sprightly and facetious, have been condemned for levity, and suspected of having no religion.

True it is our Saviour forbids "*idle*" words, but he means unprofitable, slanderous, and blasphemous words.

True it is Saint Paul forbids "*foolish talking and jesting*," but he means *obscene* talking and jesting.

But neither our Saviour nor the apostle forbid the humour and the pleasantries of kindness, charity, and christianity itself.

All this I hope to demonstrate in a future publication, should it ever be needed.

In the mean time I beg to say that I love the true seriousness inculcated by christianity, because it is different from assumed gravity and grimace—even atheists can be grave.

I love the gravity recommended by Saint Paul (1 Tim. iii. 8.), because it is connected with being not "*double tongued*."

I love the same quality recommended to

Titus (chap. ii. 7.), because it is associated with *sincerity*. But *this* gravity is very different from the gravity of an owl or a bear.

I am an advocate with Dr. Raffles of Liverpool, of *cheerful* christianity. This cheerful christianity is certainly, to some men, very expensive.

In some communities men are obliged to go without large additions to their salaries, because they have wit. On the other hand, *severe gravity* is not unfrequently a fortune to a man in these same communities.

The day is coming when the secrets of all hearts shall be made known, and when the Son of man shall reward every man according to his works. In *that* day, whatever becomes of the humourous man, certain it is, that the censorious and solemn persecutor will be in a dreadful predicament. Men that can wink at notorious evidences of pride, covetousness, selfishness, envy, evil-speaking, injustice, and other essential evils, and let fall the weight of their holy rage and indignation upon a man, merely because he is witty or eccentric, will, if they repent not, find things in a very different posture in the day of judgment, from what their present gravity and self-complacency leads them to expect.

No matter for our preaching, popularity or

eloquence, we shall certainly be lost, if not delivered from the great sin of doing injury to our christian brethren. (See Matt. vii. 1, 5, and xxi. 23; also 1 John, iii. 15, and 1 John, iv. 20.

In Saint John's epistles, frames, feelings, and experiences, are referred to. I observe then, that in the life of a true believer, there are happy frames, feelings, and experiences, the result of Christ dwelling in him, and these produce moral purity and goodness.

In the life of a self-deceiving professor, there are *delusive* frames, feelings, and experiences, and these produce selfishness, unkindness, and hypocrisy; for the first kind, see 1 John, ii. 3, 5, and 10; for the second, see John, ii. 4, 9, and 11,—where men, who talk about being in the light while hating their brethren, are spoken of. Every man hates his brother who, perpetually and without the slightest provocation, makes himself injurious to him.

It seems evident that, in the primitive churches, there were many sincere and good christians, and some delusionists and hypocrites—persons that do more mischief to christianity than professed and hostile infidels.

These strictures apply to living characters, or they do not; if they *apply*, let the parties to whom they apply, *repent*, and render them

in future inapplicable; if they do *not* apply, then they may do us all good in the way of *caution*—seeing that there *have been* such characters, and may be such again.

I close this note by an anecdote and a warning:—

Some years ago a clergyman was riding in a carriage with the bishop of * * * * It was necessary for a gate to be opened, to let the carriage pass through—the clergyman *ran* to open the gate. The bishop seriously reproved him for his want of serious clerical dignity, in not *walking* to open this gate!

Let ministers of the established church, who deserve preferment and really want it, never so sin against the "*law of gravity*," as to *run* to open gates. They should take care to walk with becoming stateliness and decorum, and to do this they may either imitate a soldier marching in a military funeral procession, or Shakspeare's boy—"creeping like a snail unwillingly to school."

I justify no man in being addicted to *levity*, strictly so called, nor would I tolerate humour and facetiousness, when not under the control of godly discretion; but I protest against the sin of *magnifying* a man's infirmities or faults, and overlooking his excellencies and servicea-

bleness. And when this propensity to magnify faults and overlook virtues, terminates in depriving him of that degree of temporal support to which he is entitled, those who take part in this conduct are protested against by God himself.

A warning :—

When christian ministers on *frivolous grounds* are kept, for many years, below their "*proper status*," or prematurely removed from scenes of successful labour, in direct opposition to the wishes and requests of their people and the public, the Almighty sometimes testifies his indignation at such cruelty. This he does either by visiting the parties concerned in it, by unexpected domestic calamity, or by desolating the churches in which such enormities have been practised. I know of cases in which religious gentlemen who have committed themselves in this way, have bitterly repented of their conduct, and, to their credit, protested that they would never do the like again. Having suffered themselves to be made the tools of solemn and ignorant fanatics, they have been, on a review of their conduct, righteously indignant at the baseness of their instigators and at their own.

I will not dare to set myself up as an inter-

preter of the actings of providence, but I know of some facts, in which injuries inflicted on useful christian ministers, have been followed by disasterous results, which the persons concerned in doing them have acknowledged to be the hand of God's retributive justice. These injurious persons have been men of peculiarly solemn aspect—smooth and oily in their words—terrible in their official deeds. Of such persons some ministers stand as much in dread as of an Indian boa constrictor or anaconda—smooth and beautiful, but deadly, serpents, that, while embracing you in their folds, are crushing you to death.

It is no light matter to lacerate the feelings of good and effective ministers, and to sport with their public reputation.

It is no light matter when a whole people, or nearly a whole people, wish a minister to stay, for a man in power to remove him.

It is no light matter when a good minister's temporal affairs might be relieved, and his prospects of coming into sunshine by his continuance, greatly widened—to push him away, again to encounter clouds and darkness—gloom and agony.

If ministers commit sin, let them be punished, by removals, or in any other way that

the church and their brethren in the ministry, may judge expedient; but when there are no charges against them, and the people love them, and religion prospers under their ministry—it is perilous to any man's soul to disturb and injure both them and their people.

It is well known that in some religious connexions great stress is laid upon the number of years a minister stays with his people, and what sort of places he labours in; and that his character and qualifications are judged of at a distance by these very things. Does he often remove and never ascend?—then it is concluded there must be something wrong in him. It seldom occurs to the minds of such judges, that what is wrong, may be on the side of those who remove and fix him.

I say no more—our opinions will be corrected before the tribunal of him who will judge the quick and dead.

Note E. *Æschines* delivered two eloquent orations, in opposition to Demosthenes, and was banished for them. He settled at Rhodes, and set up a school of eloquence, which maintained its glory for several ages.

He began his lectures with these same orations. They were much applauded. But when the oration of *Demosthenes* was read in reply,

the acclamations were redoubled. *Eschines* instead of being vexed at the superior commendations given to the speech of his rival, was pleased with them, and exclaimed, "how wonderful would you have found it, had you heard it from his own mouth!"

Let us all learn lessons from the heathen orators; and avoid jealousy and detraction.

"When Bunyan preached in London, twelve hundred would hear him at seven in the morning of winter work-days. Dr. Owen often heard him. King Charles the second asked, 'how a learned man like him could sit down to hear a tinker prate?' The great theologian is said to have answered, 'may it please your majesty, could I possess the tinker's abilities for preaching, I would most gladly relinquish all my learning.'"

This saying of the Doctor's however had more charity than wisdom in it. It was a good thing for him to be free from jealousy; but a bad thing to use a rash and unguarded expression, so liable to a mischievous interpretation, on the part of those who despise, or affect to despise, learning in the ministry.

Without learning the scriptures could not have been translated for us, and without learning a thousand things could not be done, which

are essential to be done, for the universal diffusion of christianity. And as to jealousy, we are *not* jealous, however much suspected and accused of being so, when we protest against men preaching up antinominan errors and delusions.

Popular Bunyan preached the words of truth and soberness.

Errors in doctrine, and delusions in feeling, must ever be expected from the pulpit exercises of men of weak minds and strong passions; but this is not the case with men who, like Bunyan, "give attendance to reading," and "neglect not the gift that is in them," but "*study* to approve themselves unto God—workmen that need not to be ashamed—rightly dividing the word of truth."

Men of this kind are now on the increase, and I know some local preachers in the wesleyan connexion, whose well-improved education, and leisure for study, are rendering them more than ordinarily serviceable to their congregations.

And now these valuable men are coming into my mind, I shall finish up my book by saying a little about them:—

When I was a boy, though a strict churchgoer, I entertained such a sincere respect for

all who preached the gospel, that I used to take off my hat and make a bow to accredited local preachers, whenever I met them. And I even now esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake.

But I must be understood, as referring to men who have passed their examination, and preached their trial sermons, and come upon their plans with the full concurrence of their brethren—men who always "speak the things that become sound doctrine."

These are the men who, whether popular or unpopular, are respected by all judicious hearers, wherever they go. Amongst them, in different parts of the kingdom, are to be found preachers of real eminence; to such I presume to say nothing, they are superior to my advice or teaching, and have no need of it. But I will, in a brotherly way, speak of such as have little advantage from education, and yet maintain honourable positions.

An eminent and pious bishop of our national church, in a long conversation with my humble self, on the subject of preaching, paid the highest compliment to local preachers, that any man could pay. He referred, with a dignified generosity, to the great moral reformations effected by their preaching, in certain parts of

his diocese; and added some good things which I have no room to insert.

But the question occurs—what *sort* of local preachers are they that I so much esteem, and that even *bishops* so much commend?

I will tell you. They are preachers who "redeem the time," and *prepare*, as well as their circumstances will admit, for their work in the pulpit.

If they have but little time on the week-days, or nights, they make the best of an unengaged sunday.

If they have an afternoon to spare, instead of gadding about to love-feasts, and staying late at protracted sunday night prayer meetings, they secure these afternoons and sunday nights, immediately after preaching, for the quiet reading of the scriptures, and endeavouring to get up a good sermon.

These good men feel themselves in a different position from that of private christians, and they know that it would be unfair to complain that they have *no time* for study, when they can occasionally secure a whole afternoon, and a good hour on a sunday night.

If I could have my way, local preachers, who are engaged in labour or business twelve hours every day during the week, should never lead

classes, or teach in sunday-schools. Why? Because the intelligent and qualified private members of society can do this work, and the local preacher, who wants to do substantial service in the pulpit, needs all the spare time he can get for mental improvement and pulpit preparation.

It is utterly impossible for any man to excel, or even make his way in preaching, who has not time for reading and meditation, and who does not *love* these exercises.

A man may, by the aid of a powerful memory, get by heart a few sermons, and flourish away with them for a while; but without *habits* of reading and thinking and writing, he will never sustain a respectable position as a preacher.

Travelling, as well as local, preachers are often reflected on by church clergymen, for the paucity of their sermons.

Clergymen have said to me, "why sir, fifty sermons will serve a methodist preacher for life."

Possibly these clergymen may fancy that fifteen, or even five, would serve a local preacher.

Brethren! let us shew these ministers of the establishment that they are utterly mistaken.

There may be lazy preachers, for ought I know, who go jogging on with a few old rags of sermons for many years in succession, without adding one to the lot. And if they do this, they resemble some of our old-fashioned vicars and curates, who have one lot of sermons to last through one year, and as they are preached they are carefully deposited in a tub, and when the first sunday in the new year arrives, the tub is turned bottom upwards, and they begin again; and so they go on, till their congregations know what is coming from the pulpit as well as from the reading desk.

I mean no offence, but if they will make themselves merry at our expense, they cannot take it amiss if we give them gentle hints in their own fashion.

But to our point, about these sermons. Be it known unto all men then, that there are circuits in Great Britain, in which, if a man stays two years, he must preach three hundred sermons to the same people; and should he stay three years, he must preach four hundred and fifty. And these must all be different sermons. This is especially the case in Scotland, and more especially in the north of Scotland, where our labours are confined to one or two chapels, and we have no local preachers. I myself have

had to preach three hundred sermons to the same people, and most of them about an hour in length.

Let clergymen then, many of whom I very sincerely respect, and with whom I have had much affectionate intercourse, speak *carefully* about us, and not at random.

Let them also be informed, that numbers of our ministers, though possessing hundreds of well-studied discourses, are often freshening themselves up with new ones, for their own improvement, and that of their peeple.

Brethren! let us be awake!

Church clergymen of superior piety and eminent talents are rising up all around us. We can rejoice in their success. But, as there are people enough to fill chapels and churches too, let us do the utmost to retain our members and congregations. Let us keep up by diligent study, our influence in the pulpit. Local preachers can do this. Some of you are so talented that the bishops and clergy invite you into the establishment. You go to college, and come out curates or vicars. Our people too, whether from altered views in favour of the establishment, or because it is so *respectable and genteel*, go to church. Nobody disputes their right to go, if they think proper, but I humbly think

they would not go in so great numbers, if we always did our best in the pulpit. They like methodism still, and some of those clergymen whose preaching is so attractive to them, are the sons or grandsons of methodist preachers!

Yes brethren, not a few of the brightest ornaments of the church of England, have been either methodist preachers, or are the sons of methodist preachers.

Good preaching, I grant you, has for a century past been rendered more difficult than it ever need to have been, by the insane prejudices against the use of notes in the pulpit. These prejudices have driven some good men to extremities. They have been obliged either to get their sermons by heart, or to extemporize, without sufficient ability. But happily people are now coming to their senses, and a *reciter* of sermons is as much complained of as a man who reads them. Steer between these extremities. If indeed you can preach well without notes, and yet put no merciless burden on your memory, *do so*; if not, study your sermon well—write a good solid outline of your thoughts—place it before you, and fill it up by extemporizing.

Good extemporary preaching is the result

of extensive reading and profound thinking, on a large number and variety of subjects.

Be then a diligent reader and a close thinker.

Be also a man of prayer and piety, and your "profiting will appear unto all."

As to notes, I may just add—you will seldom need them for sermons that you have often preached, and that are familiar to you. But on subjects entirely new, they will be of great service, only do not use them slavishly.

Note F. No preacher ought to appropriate this term to himself, or allow it to be given him by others, in a sense which excludes the great body of christian ministers. *All* pious ministers are revivalists. They may rationally object to innovations and self-inspired excitement in the church of God, but in the very best sense they are revivalists. They never preach the pure word of God faithfully, without reviving a concern in the ungodly, when open to conviction; and also reviving the great principles and qualities of personal holiness, in the minds and hearts of believers.

Note G. I once knew a child, of respectable parents, who had a strong relish for raw turnip parings, decayed vegetables, and tallow candles. He used to eat them, and was par-

ticularly indifferent to the ordinary and wholesome food. But this diseased appetite beginning to injure his health, he submitted to be cured of it. Are they not "children in understanding" who delight in those pulpit exhibitions called sermons, which do not nourish the soul unto life eternal?

FINIS.

IRONBRIDGE:
PRINTED BY J. SLATER, SALOP ROAD.